

Western Kentucky University
FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY
SWRK 530-700/701
Web-based (3 credit hours)

Instructor: Tina L. Peterson, PhD, MSW
Assistant Professor
Office: 115-A Academic Complex
Phone: 270-745-5058
Email: tina.peterson@wku.edu

Class Location: Online
Office Hours:
Tuesday (8:30 to 12; 1 to 2:30)
Wednesday (10 to 12) *email only*
Thursday (9 to 12)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide the student with an introduction to relationships between social policy, social welfare, and the American society. An analysis of social problems provides the foundation for understanding social welfare policy and programs. Students will apply a method for determining if an issue is a social problem based on scope, costs, values and norms of the culture, and the identification of the problem by an elite group. Elite groups are broadly defined to include politicians and interest groups. Values that drive policy decisions will be examined as well as those of the students, the profession, the American society, and those of the policy makers. Students will become familiar with the meaning of social welfare policy and the means by which it shapes social welfare institutions and programs. The course will briefly review the historical development of social welfare and social policies in the United States including the legacy of English Law on U.S. political policy. The lingering concepts of the “worthy/unworthy” recipient of public aid will be discussed both in terms of their lingering historical significance and the impact on current policy.

This course will provide an analytical framework and an evaluation of social welfare policies and the programs that evolve out of them in social welfare systems such as income maintenance, health care, mental health, and services for families and children. Various theories of policy making are presented during this course building upon material learned in a foundational American government course. Incrementalism versus rational policy making will be analyzed for the appropriateness for understanding the creation and implementation of social welfare policy. Other theories of policy making will also be explored. This information provides the generalist perspective needed to be a policy practitioner in Rural Social Welfare Policy (SWRK 630).

A foundational understanding of poverty and oppression will be explored. Poverty will be defined in various ways. Students will be encouraged to define and articulate different views of poverty including causes of poverty. Poverty theories include structural theories, economic theories, exploitation theories, and culture of poverty theories. Theories of poverty will be challenged. Poverty and oppression within the United States is similar to

poverty and oppression globally. The impact of poverty in other countries such as Mexico, Cuba, and Haiti will also be discussed within the context of American poverty. Policy issues including those related to oppressed groups such as women or minorities will be emphasized. Students will explore various current policies in social work practice. Issues of social welfare programs for the aging including social security and anti-ageism policies are studied. The Social Security Act is the framework of the American social service system. Devolution of the “safety net” and alternatives to old age social security will be explored. Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and its predecessors’ interaction with the other financial support systems and the resulting stigmatization impacts effective social services for women in poverty. Other poverty associated policy programs including food policy and charitable choice will be explored.

Policies for social services such as health care, mental health care, and child welfare are covered during this course. The passage of a national health care policy in the United States has achieved monumental attention. Social service delivery in rural communities is impacted by access to health care and parity for mental health care. Child welfare services including WIC, Headstart, and Permanency and Protection are studied. Students analyze alternatives to current traditional social problems within the realm of child welfare including international alternatives.

Policies aimed at controlling discrimination based on gender, age, sex, race, and ethnicity are examined. Students articulate the interaction between discrimination and social welfare practice. Policies across systems levels, including agency and states levels, impact the ability to provide adequate and effective services. For example, faith based social services may not allow gay or lesbian couples to adopt children from that agency. Students will be challenged to think about how such policies require advocacy and practitioner intervention in order to implement effective and ethical services. Students will use this generalist perspective of advocacy and practice to develop the skills necessary for a policy practitioner in rural communities for Rural Social Welfare Policy (SWRK 630) and Concentration Field Practicum I (SWRK 660).

This course will also examine the critical role of social workers in the social policy realm. There will be an emphasis on the social workers ethical responsibility to change and how to effect change in the American political system. In order to understand and challenge social welfare policy, social work practitioners must be able to analyze social welfare policy from a historical, social, economic, and political framework. This course will provide a framework for the analysis of social welfare policy. Students will build upon liberal arts foundational knowledge of economic and political systems. This framework includes understanding the impact of defining the social problem and the historical development of social policies on the current policy. The analysis of the policy will also explore the unintended consequences of policies on target and non-target groups. Stakeholders view of the policy as well as the effect of administration will be discussed. This provides a foundation for understanding the impact of social work administration and management on social services agencies in Social Work Administration and Supervision (SWRK 610) as well as for understanding the role of program evaluation in Applied Social Work Research (SWRK 640) as it interacts with social welfare policy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES IN RELATION TO PROGRAM INDICATORS

Program Performance Indicator 1.1.1f.

Utilize critical thinking within the context of social work practice, including an understanding of organizations and the need for planned change within service delivery systems. (EPAS 3.0.1 and EPAS 3.0.12)

1. Articulate the role of social welfare policy in generalist social work perspective. (EPAS 3.0.M6)

Program Performance Indicator 1.1.2f.

Apply a generalist social work perspective across all system levels, integrating a broad range of knowledge and theories. (EPAS 3.0.M6)

2. Articulate the policy-making process and theoretical perspectives. (EPAS 3.0.M6)
3. Compare and contrast definitions, theories and causes of poverty. (EPAS 3.0.M6)

Program Performance Indicator 2.1.6f.

Understand and apply social work values and ethics in social work practice with an appreciation for empowerment, diversity, and client strengths. (EPAS 3.0.2)

4. Identify the values that drive policy decisions. (EPAS 3.0.2).

Program Performance Indicator 2.1.7f.

Identify the impact of value conflicts and ethical dilemmas in social work practice related to ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation. (EPAS 3.0.2 and 3.0.3)

5. Describe the effects of society's responses to racism and sexism as reflected in social policies and programs. (EPAS 3.0.2 and 3.0.3)

Program Performance Indicator 4.1.10f.

Interpret historical events and circumstances as they apply to contemporary social policies and services. (EPAS 3.0.5)

6. Identify and trace the historical roots to social welfare policy in the United States as they relate to current policy. (EPAS 3.0.5)

Program Performance Indicator 4.1.11f.

Analyze policies and their implications in order to formulate effective service delivery. (EPAS 3.0.4 and EPAS 3.0.8)

7. Critically analyze the effectiveness of social welfare policies and the impact of those policies for disenfranchised populations, such as women and children, the aged, the homeless, disabled or mentally ill. (EPAS 3.0.4 and EPAS 3.0.8)
8. Evaluate the written media as it exemplifies social problems within rural areas. (EPAS 3.0.4 and EPAS 3.0.8)
9. Discuss the current scope of American social welfare policies. (EPAS 3.0.4 and EPAS 3.0.8).

Program Performance Indicator 4.1.12f.

Apply strategies and interventions that promote social, economic, and political justice that include an understanding of oppression, discrimination, and social change. (EPAS 3.0.4 and 3.0.12)

10. Demonstrate the unique contribution that social workers can make to the process of policy development and implementation (EPAS 3.0.4 and 3.0.12)

TEXTS:

Required Textbook:

Popple, P. R., & Leighinger L. (2004). *The policy based profession: An introduction to social welfare policy analysis for social workers* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon Publishing.

Recommended Textbooks:

Hacker, D. (2009). *A pocket style manual with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA updates*. 5th edition. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Haynes, K. S. & Mickelson, S. (2006). *Affecting change: Social workers in the political arena*. New York: Longman.

Jansson, B. S. (2011). *Becoming an Effective Policy Advocate: From Policy Practice to Social Justice*. 6th ed. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole.

National Association of Social Workers. (2009). *Social work speaks*. 8th ed. NASW Policy statements, 2009-2012. Washington, DC: Author.

Walsh, M. J. (1986). *The plain English handbook*. 9th edition. McMillan/McGraw Hill.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Please note the following guidelines concerning shared responsibilities of the professor and students in this course:

ON-LINE COURSE:

This entire course will be conducted on-line. However, **the first class will meet face-to-face** on South Campus to orient students to the course and on-line instruction. During the first session, the instructor will review the Blackboard course site. The remaining classes will be conducted using an on-line format. Students in on-line courses must have adequate computer equipment and basic computer skills to fulfill the course expectations. Students are responsible for accessing appropriate computer equipment to complete all course assignments. The WKU Help Desk (745-7000) should be contacted for assistance with any Blackboard related questions.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT:

Students are expected to participate in developing a positive learning environment with the desire to learn. Students are expected to be familiar with University and Department policies (WKU & Department Student Handbooks.) Additionally, every student should be familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics in terms of professional and ethical behavior in and outside of the classroom. Attendance is important to overall spontaneous learning. Failure to attend class on a regular basis might negatively affect the student's performance on course assignments and the final grade.

GRADUATE LEVEL WRITING:

Students are required to use APA style (6th ed.) for writing, citing, and listing references. The instructor expects students to be familiar with and utilize writing support services available through the WKU Writing Center (<http://www.wku.edu/pcal/writing-center>.) Students should contact the Writing Center regarding scheduling on-line appointments (<http://www.wku.edu/advising/index.php?page=about-tutortrac>.)

PLAGIARISM:

The following paragraph defines what is meant by plagiarism in this course. Students should carefully read this passage to avoid committing direct or indirect acts of plagiarism.

To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism. (Faculty Handbook, 17th ed., <http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/AcadAffairs/index1.html>)

Students should avoid any and all acts or behaviors that might be interpreted (at the instructor's discretion) as plagiarism or academic dishonesty. **Potential consequences for any act of academic dishonesty in this course might include but not be limited to:**

- An F for the assignment and/or the course
- Departmental disciplinary action
- Formal notification to the University Disciplinary Committee
- Disciplinary actions by the Dean of Student Services
- Dismissal from the university

COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR:

All students should be familiar with the instructor's office hours. The preferred method of contacting the instructor is via email. The instructor will make reasonable efforts to respond to emails in a timely effort. Students are strongly encouraged to contact the instructor for assistance as needed. For interested students, the instructor can host video appointments with students via Skype.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Each student is encouraged to submit assignments in a timely manner. The instructor will make a reasonable effort to return all assignments in a timely manner, except in extenuating circumstances. Late assignments submitted without an official documented excuse will be deducted 3 points for the first day. Thereafter, 2 points per day will be deducted for failure to submit the assignment within the designated time frame. It is the student's responsibility to submit his or her work as specified in the course syllabus and/or assignment instructions. Students must complete/submit ALL assignments (even if it is excessively late and results in no points) in order to pass the class.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS:

Students are strongly encouraged to notify the instructor **in advance** if he or she will not be able to complete/submit an assignment by the expected due date or will be absent from a face-to-face class or course related activity. Students are required to submit official documentation (e.g. physicians excuse, obituary, etc.) of an excused absence. Regardless of an excused or unexcused absence, students will be responsible for all missed class related materials. The decision to allow make up assignments will be at the instructor's discretion on a case by case basis. It is the student's responsibility to arrange to get missed course related material from a classmate or schedule an appointment to meet with the instructor. This class meets a total of 6 face-to-face visits on prescheduled Saturdays. If possible, students are strongly encouraged to schedule all non-course related business on days when the class does not meet. Any student seeking an incomplete (X) for the course must meet the criteria of the Graduate School. Incompletes will be given at the instructor's discretion.

MANAGING ASSIGNED READINGS:

The completion of weekly readings is very important to each student's overall academic performance in this course. Students are assigned a chapter from the required textbook. Highlight the major concepts and the major points presented by the author. The readings are absolutely necessary to help each student complete the assignments. Therefore, it might be difficult to complete the assignments without completing the readings.

DISABILITY POLICY:

Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Room 101, Garrett Conference Center. The OFSDS telephone number is 270-745-5004 V/TDD. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Date	Learning Objective	Activity	Assessment/Due Date
Week 1 2/5 F2F	The Policy-based Profession Review Syllabus & Textbook Overview of Teaching Style How to Read Chapters Major Concepts (OB J: #1, 9, 10)	Chapter 1 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assigned Readings
Week 2 2/12	Defining Social Welfare Policy (OB J: #1, 10)	Chapter 2 (textbook) Abramovitz (2001, 1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly Journal
Week 3 2/19 ONL	Part II: Social Welfare Policy Analysis (OB J: #1, 7, 10)	Chapter 3 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly JournalPost Topic/Discussion Board Due 2/20/11 @11:59 p.m. CST
Week 4 2/26 ONL	Policy Analysis—Historical Perspective (OB J: #4,6, 10)	Chapter 4 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly JournalCreate Historical Matrix

Date	Learning Objective	Activity	Assessment/Due Date
Week 5 3/5 ONL	Social/Economic Analysis (OB J: #4,5,7, 9)	Chapter 5 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal • Assignment #1a: Weekly Journal Due date 3/6/11 @ 11:59 p.m. CST • Create Social Matrix
Week 6 3/12 ONL	Politics & Social Welfare Policy (OB J: #2,4,10)	Chapter 6 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal • Create Political Analysis Matrix <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*WKU Spring break</i></p>
Week 7 3/19 ONL	Policy Application: Poverty & Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (OB J: #3,5,7)	Chapter 7 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal • Assignment#2: Field Policy Due 3/20/11@ 11:59 p.m. CST
Week 8 3/26 ONL	Policy Application: Child Welfare (OB J: #3,5,7)	Chapter 11 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal • Create Economic Matrix
Week 9 4/2 ONL	Policy Application: Aging & Social Security (OB J: #3,5,7)	Chapter 8 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal • Create Policy/Program Matrix

Date	Learning Objective	Activity	Assessment/Due Date
Week 10 4/9 ONL	Policy Application: Mental Health & Managed Care (OB J: #3,5,7)	Chapter 9 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal
Week 11 4/16 ONL	Policy Application: Substance Abuse (OB J: #3,5,7)	Chapter 10 (textbook) Jayakody et al (2004) (on-line)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Journal
Week 12 4/23 ONL	Policy to Practice	Chapter 12 & 13 (textbook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment#1b: Due 4/24/11@11:59 p.m. CST
Week 13 4/30 F2F	Social Workers and Policy	Development of Final Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment #3: Policy Analysis In-class presentation Due: 4/30/11 @ 9:00 a.m. CST

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment#1: Policy Current Events (15 pts. each=100 points)

This activity is designed to help social work students become more attuned to the policy-making process and its relevance to social work practice (OBJECTIVES: 1, 4, 5, 7,8, 9). Instead of exams and Black Boards, you will keep a WEEKLY journal to be turned in twice during the semester. The weekly journal will also serve as an evaluation of each students understanding and integration of the weekly readings. On January 5, 2010, the 112th United States Congress received the official oath of office. During this course, we will monitor the actions of the U.S. Congress and other major societal institutions. Read the newspaper, listen to the radio (preferably National Public Radio), and watch television. Once you tune in, you'll be surprised how much of what appears on the news is related to social welfare policy! On the BB course site, WKU has subscribed to the NBC Archives. This is a great opportunity for students to access emerging policy related issues. For this assignment only, any items obtained from NBC Archives must be current events. No past date news events. Journal entries must be: typed, Word documents, Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, and a maximum of 1 to 1.5 pages. **NOTE:** Keeping up with your readings will help you complete Assignment #3 in a timely manner.

Weekly journal must include the following information:

Weekly Journal (include # for designated week)

Date of news report, type of media source, specify broadcast station

Summary (2 to 3 paragraphs containing at least 6 to 7 sentences each)

- What were the main issues discussed in the news report?
- How does this news report relate to specific course readings?
- What are your personal reflections and/or criticisms of the news report?
 - Be specific. Give examples and other evidence from the readings. No direct quotes!
 - You are the student analyst. Demonstrate that you read and understand the specific reading. Explain and give supporting evidence. If anything in the reading was unclear, include it also.

Assignment #2: Field or Employment/Agency Policy Report (100 points)

Identify a local, state, or federal policy that affects a target population at your field or employment agency (OBJECTIVES: 1, 4, 5, 7, 10). The policy you choose should be different from the one you assess for the Policy Paper assignment. Write a 5 double-spaced page paper that addresses the following information. Attach a copy of the policy to your paper. Spelling and grammar should be correct (5 pts.)

1. Identify and interview 1-2 key people in your agency about the policy. If available, attend a meeting of agency, community, or governmental decision-makers who have influence over the policy or seek to influence it. Identify those whom you interview and why they were important to interview. If you attend a meeting, describe the nature of the meeting and who attended it. (5 pts.)

2. Describe the policy, what it is intended to achieve, and who are the decision-makers in regard to its implementation. (10 pts.)

3. Discuss (60 pts.):

- a. The effects (intended and unintended) the policy is having on
 - 1) the target population you select and
 - 2) social work/ social service personnel at your field agency.
- b. Ethical dilemmas, value issues, or role conflicts involved with the implementation of the policy.
- c. If and how the policy affects people of color, people who are poor, children, women, gay, lesbian, and transgendered persons, immigrants, elderly people, people who are otherwise oppressed or discriminated against, other vulnerable groups in society or other diversity-related issues in:
 - 1) the target population,
 - 2) your field agency, and
 - 3) the community.
- d. Discuss how the policy might be improved and the role of social workers in making the improvements you recommend.

4. Reflect on what you learned from this analysis that applies to your social work practice (20 pts.).

Assignment #3: Policy Analysis Paper (150 points):

Write a paper on a policy issue that both interests you and has significance for social workers (OBJECTIVES: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10) . The paper should follow the analytic framework provided in the Popple and Leighninger textbook (pg. 31-32)) to guide the development of the paper. Papers must have an introduction and a conclusion. All students **must** report the topic of his/her assignment to the instructor on the discussion forum before beginning the project. Students should not duplicate a specific topic selected by another student. Appropriate APA citation, grammar, and writing mechanics is expected of all students. NOTE: This assignment is not due until the last face-to-face class meeting. However, students are strongly encouraged to begin this project early in the semester.

Section I: This section of each student's paper should be a written research report that addresses the requested information for **Part I**. In other words, the first section of your paper is to clearly define the social problem or social policy self-selected by the student. Please use the textbook (pg. 31) as a reference for what to include in this section. **Read pg. 74-76 in the textbook for common problems students should avoid when writing a policy analysis.** Students will be graded on the **quality and thoroughness** of the written analysis. Subheadings must be inserted into the paper. The identification of the social

problem or social policy must be accurate because it can affect the responses that you give in Section II. (35 pts.)

I. Dileneation and Overview of the Policy under Analysis

Complete Part A thru D (5 pages)

Section II: In this section of the paper, students are required to research specific information about the social problem or social welfare policy identified in Section I. The findings are to be inserted into a *matrix table*. An example of a matrix table is the weekly course outline boxes included in this syllabus. Students will insert bulleted list or short descriptive statements with the requested information for the remaining portions of the analysis into the matrix tables. Some sections might have less information than others. Students must be careful to only include the most relevant information. A matrix table can be created by selecting “insert” “table” into a Microsoft Word document or in Microsoft Excel. All requested information in the matrix table should be clearly labeled with distinct abbreviated headings. Example: Past Policies/Programs or Stated Goals. All of this information is identified in the chapter relevant to the section. Therefore, the instructor will also use the matrix tables to evaluate whether students are reading and understanding the material. Each new matrix table should begin on a separate page. Example: If Part II ends in the middle of a page, do not start Part III on the same page. List information for Part III on a new page.

II. Historical Analysis (complete Part A thru C) (20 pts.)

III. Social Analysis (complete Part 4 thru 6) (20 pts.)

IV. Economic Analysis (complete Part A thru C) (20 pts.)

V. Political Analysis (Part A thru D) (20 pts.)

VI. Policy/Program Evaluation (Part A thru C) (20 pts.)

VI. Conclusion

Reflect on what you learned from this analysis that applies to your social work practice (15 pts.) (2 paragraphs; no matrix)

IMPORTANT: Students will give a 5 minute in class presentation of his/her topic. The presentation will **not** be graded. Time restrictions will apply.

GRADING SYSTEM:

The following grading formula will apply:

358 –400	A
318 –357	B
278 –317	C
238 –277	D
0 –237	F

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Web-based Sites: (these sites have topics & research relevant to social welfare policy)

Administration for Children and Families: <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>

Administration on Aging. <http://www.aoa.gov/>

Asst. Secy. of HHS for Planning and Evaluation: <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov>

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. <http://www.bazelon.org/>

Brookings Institution <http://www.brookings.edu>

Center for Law and Social Policy: <http://www.clasp.org>

Fragile Families and Child Well-Being <http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/>

Heritage Foundation: <http://www.heritage.org>

Institute for Policy Research. <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/>

National Center for Children in Poverty.
http://www.nccp.org/profiles/state_profile.php?state=KY&id=6

National Poverty Center. University of Michigan. <http://www.npc.umich.edu/>

University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research. <http://www.ukcpr.org/>

Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org>

OTHER:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed with reasonable notice and accommodations for the students.